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Title: Whirlpool

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Detective Iris stood over what was one of the worst murder scenes he'd ever seen. The victim, still unknown, lay face down in the street. A large puddle of blood had formed in a wavy

circle, around the head. The throat had been slashed to the bone. Yet this wasn't even the eeriest part. On the victim's back, the name IRIS was sliced. The blade lay jammed into the back,

just under the carved name. It was a grotesque image. The detective just looked at the body for a moment. Who would do something so horrible? Maybe more importantly, what did this have to do

with him? Was the killer trying to send a message to the detective? It seemed an unlikely scenario, since Iris had only been employed in Britain for a month. Who could know him? The

questions just continued to flood into his head. The captain on the scene stepped up from behind. "You doin' okay there?" Iris just kept looking straight ahead. "Yea...think so..."

The captain cleared his throat and let the silence settle for a moment.

"You know...you don't have to take this one if you don't want to....we can get another forensic team out here."

Iris just shook his head. If his life could be in danger, who else would be more dedicated to solving the case? He bent down to take a closer look at the body.

"This knife...he just left

it. Seems a little careless. Until we can figure out who this poor guy is, I think this might be our biggest clue."

He eased the knife out of the corpse, and handed it over to the captain.

He stood back up.

"Ray...you wanna go get all the local clerks down here to see if they've seen this guy before?

We need to ID this guy.."

Ray, one of the other men on the scene, took

off running to the nearest shops. Iris turned back to the body, rubbing his temples lightly. This whole thing was giving him a headache. Or maybe it was a cold with bad timing....he did notice a

bit of a sore throat and stuffed nose starting to kick in. Regardless, he felt like crap, physically and mentally. He heard footsteps pattering back towards him, down the street. He turned to see

the captain coming back. Iris looked at him, waiting for the news. The captain held up the knife.

"Our guys took a quick look at it. It's just your standard hand dagger...this

model definetly came

outta the local smith. The boys said that with the quality and tone of the blade and hilt, this can't be more than two days old. Things are lookin' mighty good, right now, I'll tell ya that much!"

Iris looked back at the knife, relieved that such a big break had been made.

"Yea...nice. When Ray gets back here with the local guys, we should probably talk to the smith, eh. I

bet he can tell us who's been there in the past few days, and better yet, who's bought a knife like that. In fact, I think that's them comin' now, over there, isn't it? Get the knife ready for him."

Just then, Ray ran back to the scene, followed by about a dozen of the locals. They all talked at once, some letting out horrified cries at the scene before them. The captain stepped up in

front of them all and made himself heard.

"Hey! Which one of you in the bunch is the smith? We got some important questions."

A middle aged man stepped forward, pale as

a ghost.

"M...me, sir."

The captain held up the blood stained knife.

"Recognize this? Our boys say it came outta your shop in the past few days. You remember

selling this to anyone?"

The smith looked over at

Iris, then back to the captain, then to the knife. He turned even more white.

"Y...yes sir...b..but...what's the meaning of this? I

don't understand.."

Iris sighed. He was much too stressed to deal with this right now.

"What don't you understand? That knife. That body. Who's is it? You know. Tell us what

you know. Just tell us. You see that name in that guy's back? That's me. That's my name. I could be killed, here, if we don't get this guy soon, so just PLEASE tell us what you know

about this knife."

The smith looked at the knife again and instantly started crying. He just kept shaking his head and saying "I dont understand! I dont understand!" Ray ran over and pulled him

aside, trying to talk some sense into him. Iris turned back to the crowd.

"Alright...well, then, we gotta have the rest of you see if you can ID this guy. No one here

knew him, and he's not exactly a pretty picture right now, so it might not be easy. But if any of you can recognize him, just let us know what you can."

He nudged the body onto

its back with his foot, so his blood stained visage faced the crowd. They all seemed to gasp at once and look away in disgust and horror. A faceless

voice muttered, "Oh
God...not him...not him,"

somewhere from the
crowd. The captain took a
deep breath.

"So...anyone?"

A young man, no more
than 18 years of age,
stepped forward. Before
he could speak, however,

the smith was down on
the ground, with Ray's
knee in his back. Ray was
pounding the man into
submission.

Iris chuckled,
"Well, I'd say we found
the owner of that little

knife..."

The captain cleared his
throat and turned back
to the young man.

"So...you know this guy?
We'd like to find out as
soon as possible, so we
can notify the family.

Please....whatever you can
tell us."

The young man just
looked down at the bloody
face.

"Yea...I know the guy.
Came into the shop every
day, and never bought a

thing... Always loved the
guy though...was a good
friend. My father wanted
him to marry my sister
y'know...woulda made a hell
of a brother in law."

A tear slowly rolled down
his cheek.

"Always dreamed of being
a great detective one day
too. But yea....yea that's
him.... Was one of my
best friends. Edward
James Iris...Can't believe
it's really him..."

The captain nudged the

mutilated body back over
onto its face. Looked like
this case was solved.